

Breaking barriers to research skills training and enabling access those who need it the most

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Introduction:

The Global Health Network operates a free and open access Training Centre that provides research staff and healthcare workers of all roles, all regions and all disease areas with the 'how-to' training courses required to safely conduct high quality research in resource limited settings.

Aim: Everyone working in global health research should have access to effective and appropriate research skills training. This is particularly important in resource-poor settings where the need for locally applicable research findings is so important. The Training Centre aims to provide online training courses that can be accessed by everyone in every setting for free.

Methods: The Global Health Training Centre offers 30 high quality, peer reviewed online training courses across a wide range of research topic areas and each course is designed to be accessible from areas with low bandwidth internet connectivity, which can often be a barrier accessing online training in resource-poor settings. All of the courses (and certificates of completion) are completely free of charge and available to download so they can be taught offline individually or in a group setting.

Results: The online training courses are hugely popular with 2018 seeing over 264,000 modules taken by over 52,000 e-Learners, this was a 58% and 63% increase respectively compared to 2017 bringing the total overall modules taken to 600,000 by 110,000 e-Learners with over 250,000 certificates awarded. Individuals from 195 countries across the globe have utilised the courses offered by the Training Centre with Africa the continent accessing the most with 35% of all access 96% of eLearners would recommend the courses to a colleague and 85% percent rated their confidence of completing a course-specific task between 7 to 10 on a confidence scale (1= not confident at all, 10 = extremely confident).

Conclusion: Free, easily accessible, high quality online research skills training is clearly a need in the research community in resource poor settings. Increased collaboration and sharing of training materials between organisations and institutions is required to produce further online training courses to support staff and develop capacity to conduct research.